

Fireplaces, Space Heaters and Stoves

According to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), home fires cause more than 4,000 deaths and tens of thousands of injuries each year in the United States. Many of those incidents are caused from fireplaces, space heaters, and stoves. Any fuel-burning system should be serviced by a professional at the beginning of the heating season to make sure that all systems are operating properly. The damper, vents, and chimney should be checked regularly to ensure proper operation. And always keep a fire extinguisher handy wherever there is a risk of fire. Here are some other suggestions for keeping the home fire safe.

Fireplaces

- Don't use your fireplace to burn wrapping materials – this can create toxic fumes and flash fires.
- Follow the directions on the package if you use man-made logs. Never break a man-made log apart to quicken the fire.
- Never close the damper with hot ashes in the fireplace and be sure the fire is out before retiring for the evening.
- Always use a sturdy screen when fireplaces are in use.
- Burn only wood. Paper or pine boughs can float out the chimney and ignite your roof or neighboring homes. Also, plastic, charcoal or Styrofoam can produce toxic gases!
- Use kindling and wooden matches to light fires – not flammable liquids.
- Don't wear loose or flowing clothes when tending the fire.
- Keep flammable decorations (ensure Christmas stockings are not flammable) away from the fireplace.
- Don't close the chimney flue until you're sure the fire is completely out.
- Make sure the fire is out before leaving the house or going to bed.



Portable Space Heaters

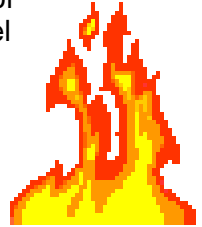
- Be sure your heater is in good working condition. All room heaters need frequent checkups and cleaning. A dirty or neglected heater is a critical fire hazard.
- Maintain adequate clearance (at least 3 feet) in all directions around space heaters.
- Never leave an operating heater unattended, near children and pets.



- Never dry clothes or other combustibles near heaters.
- Check electric heaters for frayed wires and evidence of overheating.

Kerosene Heaters

- Use only water-clear 1-K grade kerosene. The wrong fuel could burn hotter than equipment's design limits.
- Never use gasoline. Even small amounts of gasoline or other volatile fuels or solvents mixed with kerosene can substantially increase the risk of a fire or an explosion.
- Never refuel the heater inside the home. Fill the tank outdoors, away from combustible materials, and only after the heater has been turned off and allowed to cool. Do not fill the tank above the FULL mark. The space above the FULL mark is to allow for expansion without causing leakage when the heater is operating. Wipe up fuel spills immediately.
- In case of a flare-up, activate the manual shut-off switch. If this does not extinguish the fire, leave the house immediately and call the fire department. Don't move the heater or use water or a blanket to stop the fire.
- Use only in well-vented rooms, and open an outside window approximately one inch to permit fresh air to effectively dilute the pollutants below a level of concern.
- Always keep the wick clean and properly adjusted according to the manufacturer's instructions.



Stoves (wood and gas)

- Be sure the stove bears the label of a recognized testing laboratory and meets local fire codes.
- Follow the manufacturer's recommendations for proper installation, use, and maintenance.
- Periodically inspect and clean the chimney connections and flues.
- Never use a gas range or an oven to heat your home. Any un-vented, fuel-burning appliance is capable of producing high levels of carbon monoxide.
- Check with local fire department and code officials before installing a wood stove.

